

# Business Writing



# Business Writing

What's wrong with my writing skills?



I write as well as anyone!

*(I passed Composition 101!!)*



# ***Business Writing References***

## **Business Writing**



- ***The Elements of Style***
- **DAU Courseware**
- ***Contract Management (NCMA)***



# We will concentrate in these areas:

## Business Writing

- ◆ Purpose
- ◆ Organization
- ◆ Format
- ◆ Editing





# Purpose: Why you are writing...

## Business Writing

- Explain/Justify an action

**J & A**

**Source Selection Decision  
Contracting Officer's Decision**

- Inform



**PWS, Contract, Amendment, Modification**

- Influence

**Negotiation**

- Deliver Good/Bad News

**Debrief**

- Request Action

**RFP, RFQ, IFB**

**Revised proposals  
Show cause**



# Business writing affects the...

## Business Writing

- ✓ **Performance Work Statement**
- ✓ **Contract**
- ✓ **J & A**
- ✓ **Source Selection Plan**
- ✓ **Source Selection Decision**
- ✓ **Amendments / Modifications**
- ✓ **Contracting Officer's Decision**

**...to name a few!**

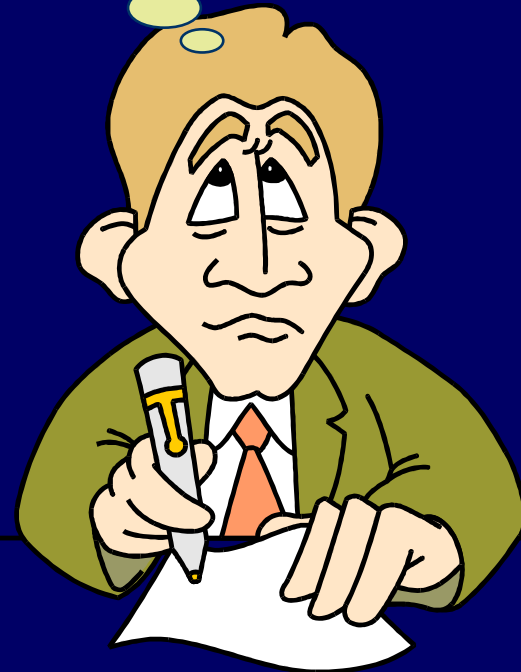
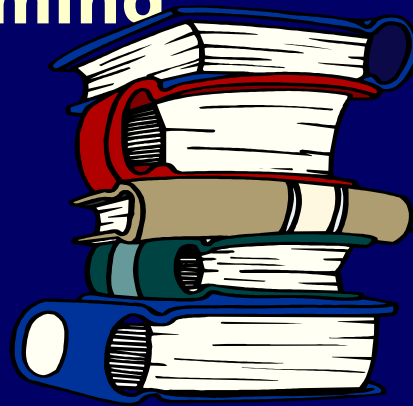


# Getting Organized

## Business Writing

How do I start..?

- Questioning
- Brainstorming
- Tree Diagramming





# Questioning

## Business Writing

What? Outcome? When?  
Point of contact? How long?  
How many? Where?





# Brainstorming

## Business Writing

Schedule

To inform about a  
new requirement  
(e.g. PWS)

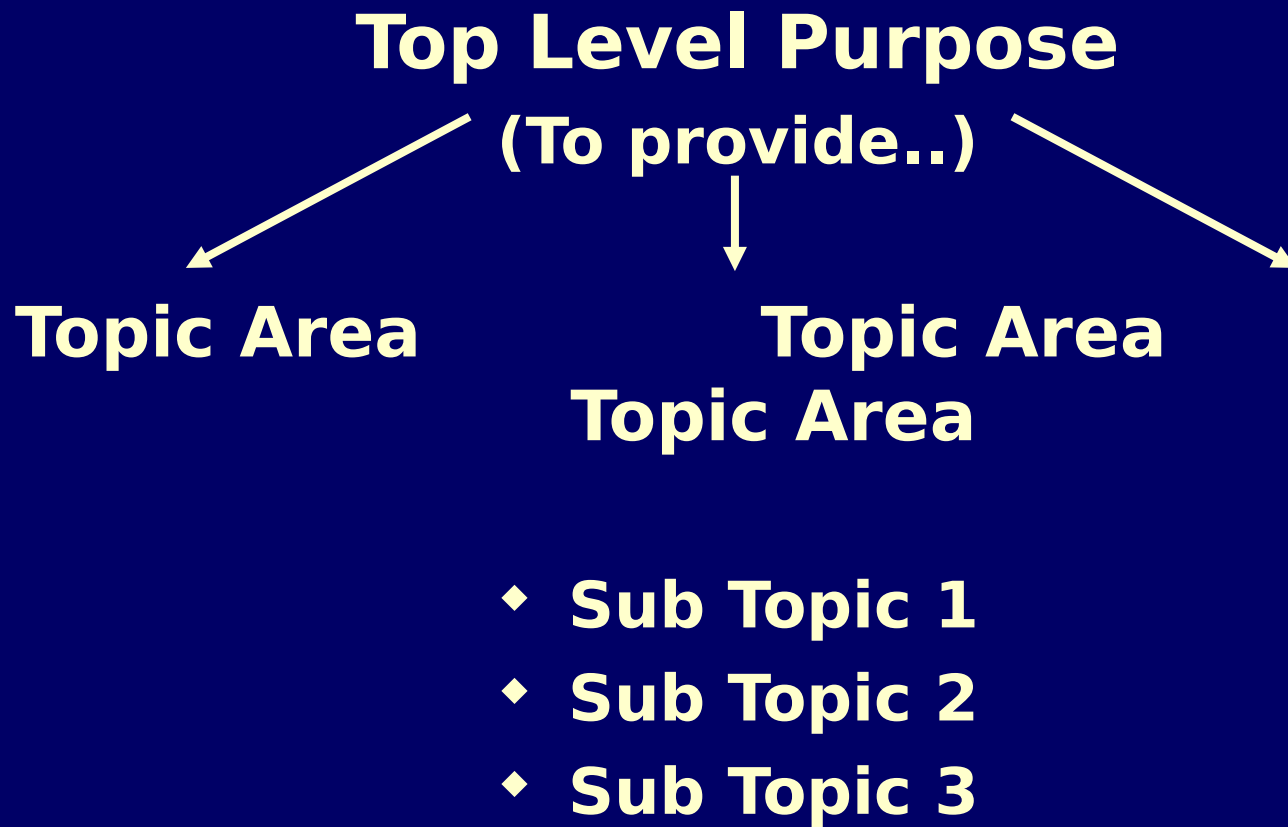
Market research

Critical tasks  
Standards

Outcome



# Tree Diagramming





# Performance Requirements Summary

## Business Writing

Task	Performance Standard	Performance Indicator	ALP %	Surveillance Method	Incentive
		Actual Performance			
	Type of Standard "How Wells"			Type of Sampling	

**Critical Tasks  
"Do Whats"**

**Acceptable Level of Performance**

**Y/N  
+/-**



## Format

Where do I start...?

- Order of importance
- Chronological
- Process
- General - Specific



**Choose an approach before you begin drafting**



# Visual Presentation

## Business Writing

- Font type  
The Army requires. ..  
The Army requires...  
The Army requires...

- Font Size  
The Army requires...  
The Army requires...  
The Army requires...

- Margins  
No margin,  $\frac{1}{2}$ ", 1"

- Use of 'white space'

- **Line spacing**
- **Indentation**
- **Paragraphs**
- **Margins (again)**

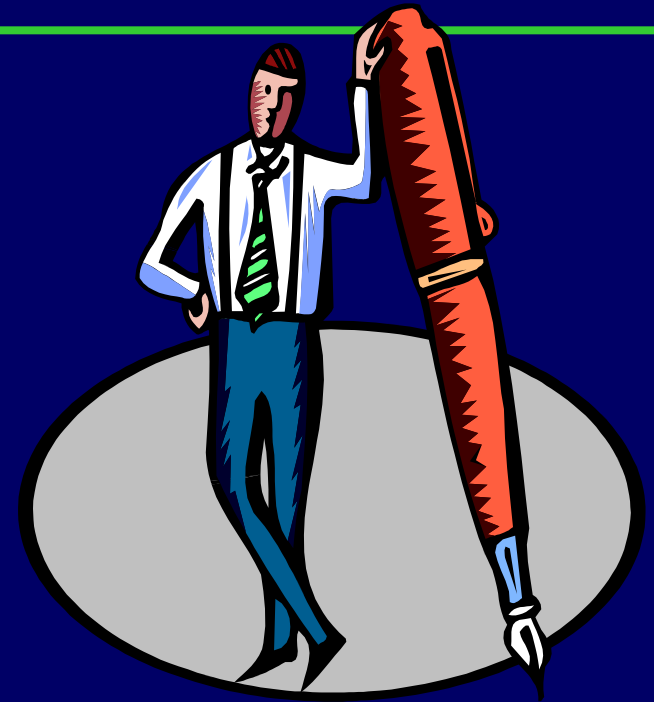


# Drafting

✓ Organization

✓ Format

□ Editing



## Rules of the *draft*:

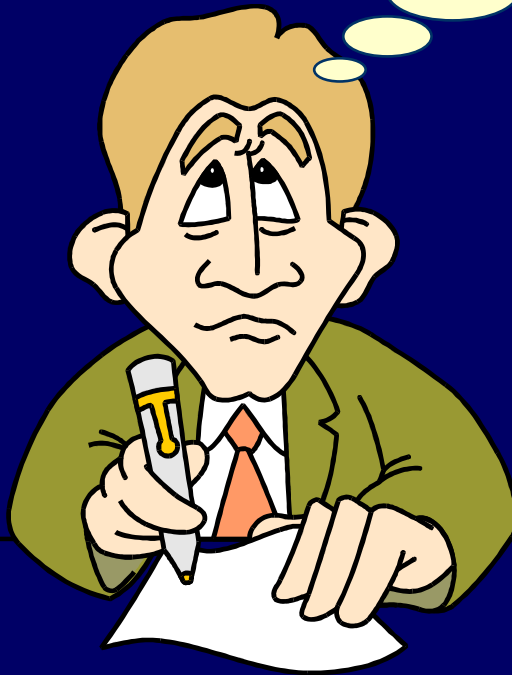
- Write main points; don't worry about details
- Rough sentence structure, grammar, spelling
- Start point may be front, middle, end



# Editing is...

## Business Writing

**'Happy'? or 'Glad'?**



- **iterative**
- **dynamic**
- **potentially never-ending**

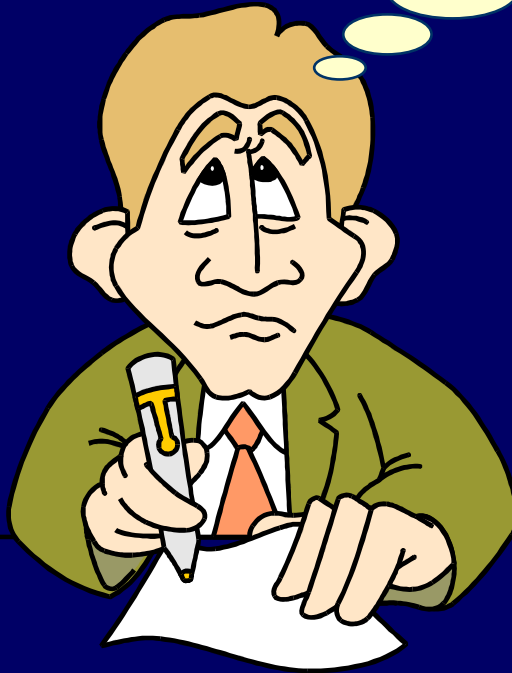
- **Basics**
- **Tighten**
- **Fine tune**



# 'Readability'

## Business Writing

I must communicate!



- Sentence length
- # multi-syllable words
- Writing standard
- Complexity

How well does my document convey the purpose?



# Paragraphs

**How many... words? lines? sentences?**

**Single topic**

**Introductory or Transition sentence**

**Signal to the reader**

**Visual presentation**





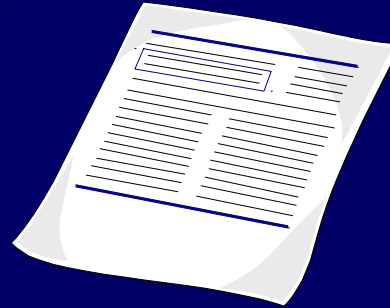
# Edit for Content & Clarity

## Business Writing

### CONTENT

✓ Organization

✓ Format



☐ Tasks & schedule identified?

☐ All information required for a response?

### CLARITY

☐ Accurate?

☐ Complete?

☐ Require assumptions?

☐ Conflicts and contractions?



## Brevity

At her Director's suggestion, and with the  
help of counsel, the Contracting Officer  
wrote detailed debriefing letters to the  
three unsuccessful offerors in hope of  
avoiding a challenge.

The Contracting Officer wrote a  
detailed debriefing letter to the  
unsuccessful offerors.



# Spelling

**succedaneum**

**Spell check won't help you with these:**

**there - their - they're**

**its - it's**

**were - we're**

**affect - effect**

**principle - principal**

**complement - compliment**

**accept - except**

**to - two - too**

**night not 'nite'**

**through not 'thru'**



# Word Choice: Phrases

## Business Writing

change the paradigm

think outside of the box

It is important to note...

Notwithstanding the fact that

During such time...

avoid unnecessary  
preambles



# Word Choice

~~may~~, ~~should~~, ~~can~~

~~any~~ ~~either~~ ~~and/or~~

The Contractor shall wash the window thorough

The Contractor shall provide services that meet or exceed ISO xxxx. Electronic reports shall be made to the COR by 1600 hours daily. It shall reflect the areas of management, availability, and timeliness of response. When it cannot comply with the standard, it shall give him notice before it is breached.



# Grammar

## Business Writing

Rule of the last  
Antecedent

split infinitives

*dangling participles*

*gerunds*

*intransitive verb*



# Voice

**I shall always remember my visit to Hawai**

**My visit to Hawaii shall always be reme .**

**There were a great number of dead leaves ly  
on the ground.**

**Dead leaves covered the ground.**





# Use the *active voice*...

## Business Writing

**Sealed proposals will be received at this office until 12 o'clock noon on February 1, 1908, on behalf of the Board of Ordnance and Fortification for furnishing a heavier-than-air flying machine. All proposals received will be turned over to the Board of Ordnance and Fortification at its first meeting after February 1 for its official action.**



# Activities and Accomplishments

## Business Writing

**Activities** are the actions taken to produce results and are generally

- *developing software programs*
- *answering customer questions*
- *writing reports*

**Accomplishments** are (the results of) the products or services of individual contractor and team activities and are generally

- a software program that works
- accurate guidance to customers
- a report complete and accurate



# Ambiguities

## Ambiguity:

- A requirement that is susceptible to more than one reasonable interpretation.
- The interpretation is consistent with the solicitation when read as a whole.

Ambiguities are construed against the drafter



# Avoid Ambiguity...

## Business Writing



### Common Ambiguities:

- Inconsistent requirements
- Calling a requirement by different names
- Conflicting or unreasonable schedules
- Incomplete requirement descriptions
- Language



# Avoid these pitfalls

## Business Writing

- ◆ **Insufficient information - answer the reader's questions**
- ◆ **Assuming the reader's knowledge**
- ◆ **Vague or ambiguous**
- ◆ **Too specific**
- ◆ **Working alone**





# Let's apply some of this...

Oh-oh, here comes  
the quiz!



**Pick the grammatically  
correct sentence!**

**Business Writing**



# Common Grammatical Mistakes

## Business Writing

1. Your home and all it's contents are only protected if you lock the door when you leave.
2. Your home and all its contents are only protected if you lock the door when you leave.
3. There going on they're weekly lunch date to the restaurant over their.
4. They're going on their weekly lunch date to the restaurant over there.
5. Gold prices have no affect on purchasing power.
6. Gold prices have no effect on purchasing power.
7. The earning report is not expected to effect the stock price in the long-term.
8. The earnings report is not expected to affect the stock price in the long-term



# Common Grammatical Mistakes- II

.9 I'm going to lay down for a nap.

(10) I'm going to lie down for a nap.

11. Your smart to realize that your flip-flops aren't appropriate office attire.

(12) You're smart to realize that your flip-flops aren't appropriate office attire.

.13. Don't loose that house key.

(14) Don't lose the house key.





# Common Grammatical Mistakes- III

15. First, you write and polish your resume,  
than you look for a job.
16. First, you write and polish your resume,  
than you look for a job.
17. Joyce is prettier then Sarah.
18. Joyce is prettier than Sarah.
19. My computer at work is different  
than the one I have at home.
20. My computer at work is different  
from the one I have at home.



# Common Grammatical Mistakes- IV

## Business Writing

21. The principle reason for the set-aside is the *Rule of Two*.

22. The principal reason for the set-aside is the *Rule of Two*.

23. The principle of full an open competition is basic to federal procurement.

24. The principle of full an open competition is basic to federal procurement.

25. The prime's subcontractors complemented its basic capabilities.

26. The Director complimented the work of the staff.



# Summary: Business Writing

## Business Writing

